

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

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PART II

PRELIMINARY TO THE REHABILITATION OF  
THE ADAMS LIBRARY

Adams National Historical Site

Architectural Data Section

by  
Thomas Wister, Jr.  
January 1962

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THE ADAMS LIBRARY

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Prepared by  
Thomas Wistar, Jr.  
Architect

January, 1962

(Pg 5)  
See memo H-30-H to NERO, dtd 1-26-62

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PART II  
PRELIMINARY TO THE REHABILITATION OF  
THE ADAMS LIBRARY

APPROVAL SHEET

RECOMMENDED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent Date \_\_\_\_\_

Charles E. Peterson Date 1/25/62  
Supervising Architect, Historic Structures

By: Thomas Wistar, Jr. Date 1/25/62  
Thomas Wistar, Jr.

Robert G. Hall Date 1-25-62  
Robert G. Hall  
Chief, EODC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Director, Region Five Date \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# I. PRESENT CONDITION OF STRUCTURE AND FABRIC

The exterior of the building stands today as it was built in 1870 with no subsequent additions or alterations. The interior has undergone minor alterations with additions to the bookcases in 1878 and the gallery added at a later date. A humidified, warm air system was installed in the building in 1959 with ducts running from below grade up the boxed-in ends of the bookcases at the northeast and northwest corners of the room.

Structurally the building is basically sound. But the waterproof condition of walls and roof has deteriorated. This is due in large part to the effects of an all enveloping mat of vines which at times completely covered the walls and portions of the roof. General rehabilitation to correct this leaking of walls and roof is required.

Leaking of the walls below grade has caused a damp condition below and behind the bookcases which line the walls around the room. Condensation running down the inside face of the walls behind the bookcases has added to the dampness. This has resulted in extensive rotting and damage by termites of the framework supporting the bookcases and the base of the gallery posts. Replacement is required here. The shelving bracketed from the wall above the fireplace requires additional support. The marble mantle shelf is cracked through and should be mended.

The french doors have cracked due to long exposure and need protection from the weather.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Repairs to Roof

The roof flashing should be carefully checked and replaced where necessary with copper flashing. The skylight on the north slope of the roof should be reconditioned and made water tight. Roofing boards should be examined at their juncture with the gable parapets and replaced if necessary.

A copper gutter should be installed along the eave on the south side of the building to prevent the run off from the south slope of the roof collecting at the base of the wall.

### B. Reconditioning Exterior Walls

The vines should be cut back on the walls where required to recondition masonry. The stone side walls and brick end walls should be carefully examined. All loose or deteriorated mortar joints should be raked out and repointed with mortar to match the existing joints.

The chimney needs special attention. It should be taken down where required to reset loose brick or replace crumbling brick and entirely repointed. A copper cap should be fitted over its top and the entire surface treated with a waterseal solution.

### C. Protecting Doorways

All the doors and door frames need to be reconditioned. They should be recaulked and painted and their glass reset. The bottom of the frame of the west doorway on the south wall is

rotted and needs to be patched.

All the doorways, with the exception of the one on the south side which is used for the main entrance, should have outside storm sash installed to match the doors and transoms in design. All the storm sash should be fixed, excepting one leaf in the south door (not the main entrance) which can serve as an emergency exit. All glass panes should be made replaceable with screen panels.

#### D. Repair of Bookcases and Balcony Posts

The rehabilitation of the bookcase supports should be accomplished without removing the books from the shelves above the bottom tier. This can be done by shoring up the shelf above the projecting bottom section, upon which the up-rights are mounted.

The books should be protected from dust and dirt during the operations by sealing the shelves with plastic covers. Some plan for providing special security of the books must be set up. Any moving or handling of the books should be done by the Park staff only.

The bottom shelf and the backing at the base of all the bookcases should be removed. All rotted framing and furring should be removed and the dirt and gravel fill beneath the bookcases should be cleaned out. Concrete bracket footings should be placed below the up-rights and door jambs and new

framing should replace the present members where conditions require it. Replace furring backing boards, bottom of bookcase partitions and door jambs, and bottom shelf where found to be rotted or eaten by termites. Provide slot in baseboard under bottom shelf and behind bottom backing board to provide a passage of air under bottom of bookcases. If structurally possible the furred space behind should be opened at the top of the bookcases. The bottom shelf should be made removable to allow easy access for inspection and maintenance.

The bottoms of all four balcony posts should be examined and, where found to be rotted, should be cut off and replaced with new oak seated on a 4" steel stilt.

The cracked marble mantel shelf should be carefully repaired by metal clamps or straps on the lower face of the shelf.

Loose floor tile should be reset.

#### E. Preservation and Maintenance

The proper care and preservation of a valuable collection of books such as is contained in the Adams Library requires an unusual degree of attention to the building that houses it.

The maintenance program to be worked out should be principally concerned with accomplishing the following: To keep the interior free of dampness, to keep it free of wood-eating insects, and to maintain a constant degree of humidity within the building during periods when the building is heated.

While it is not necessary to permanently remove the vines from the walls of the building they should be kept clear of roofs, flashings, gutters, and all exterior wood trim to prevent deterioration and rotting. The ground at the base of the wall around the building should be cleared of foliage to allow the sun and wind to dry out the wall. The necessity for this is particularly indicated along the south side of the building. Here the wall has been kept almost continuously damp by the insulation of the thick growth of wistaria vine and the accumulation of rotting foliage. The foliage should be clipped away from the vine trunks up to two feet above grade to allow the sun to penetrate. The rotted leaves and dirt should be dug out around the vine's trunks and the trench back-filled with pebbles or gravel. This will cause the water to drain to the bottom of the trench instead of pushing through the wall.

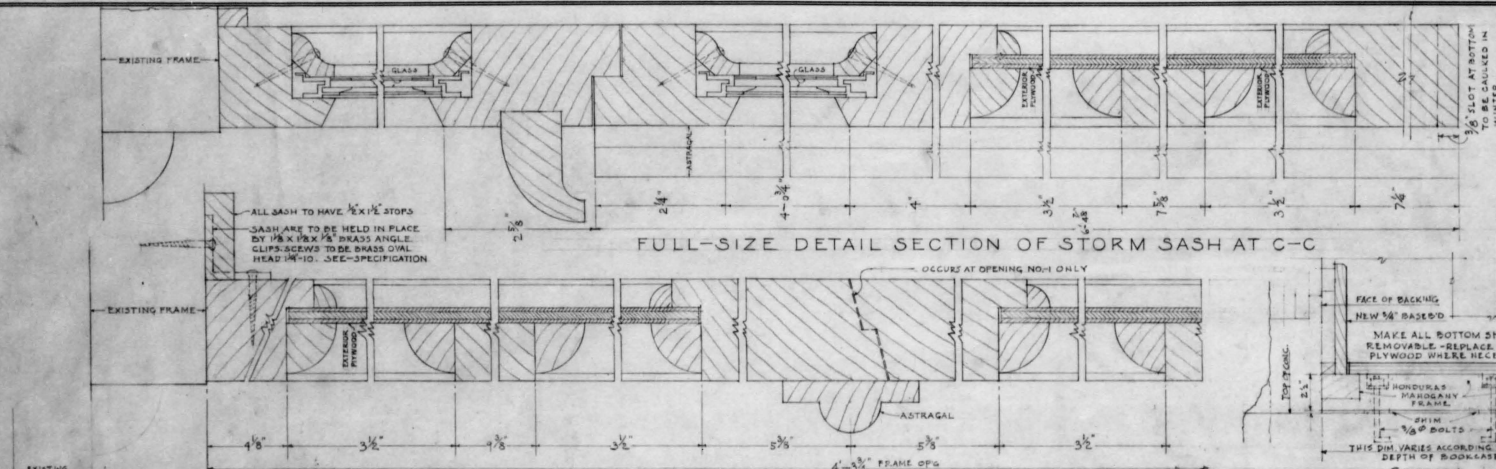
All exterior woodwork should be inspected seasonally and given a coat of paint if found necessary. All interior woodwork should be oiled once a year.

The interior of the building should be fumigated with cyanide gas once a year to eradicate the termites and powder post beetles within the woodwork. The bottom shelves should be removed when this is done.

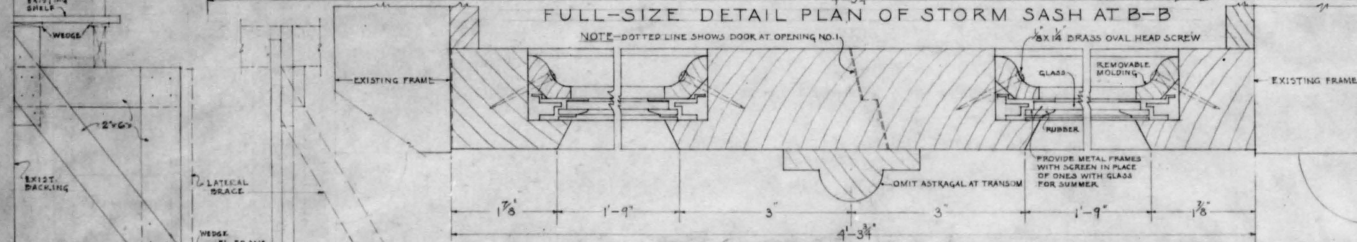
It is imperative that the humidity content of the heated air in the wintertime be kept at a proper level to prevent the leather book bindings from drying out. The operation of the humidity control of the heating system must be constantly checked and immediately serviced when not functioning properly.

III. ILLUSTRATION

Drawing No. NIS-ADA 3003

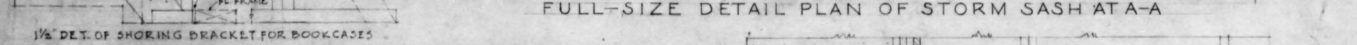


FULL-SIZE DETAIL SECTION OF STORM SASH AT C-C

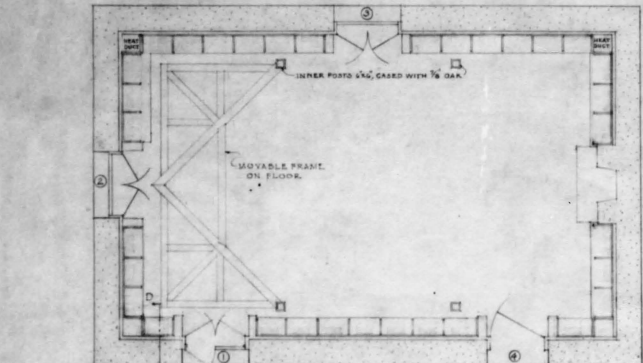


FULL-SIZE DETAIL PLAN OF STORM SASH AT B-B

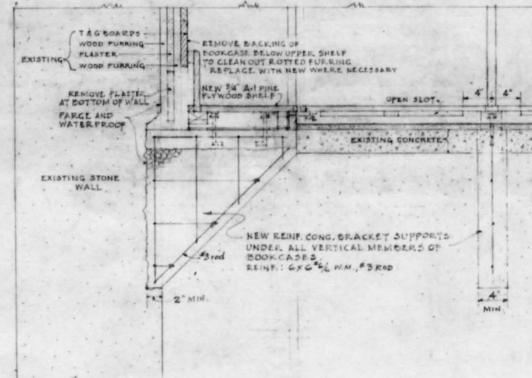
NOTE-DOTTED LINE SHOWS DOOR AT OPENING NO. 1



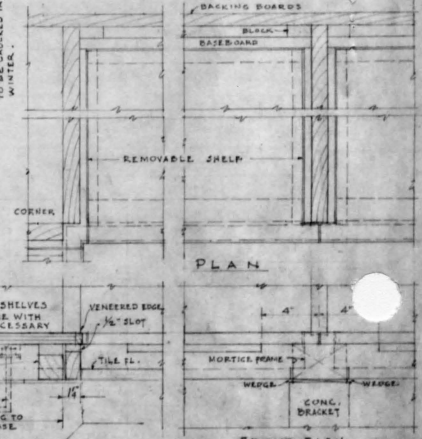
FULL-SIZE DETAIL PLAN OF STORM SASH AT A-A



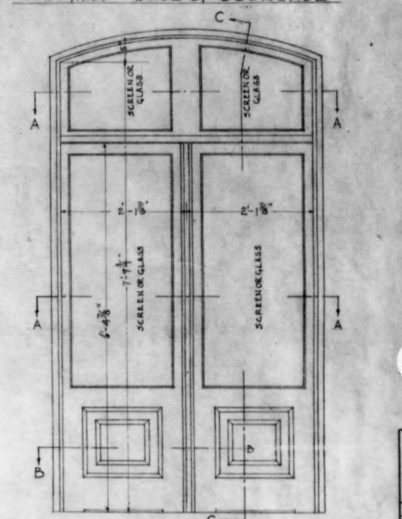
PLAN OF LIBRARY  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



SECTION AT D-D ON PLAN  
SCALE 1/2"=1'-0"



3' DETAILS - BASE OF BOOKCASE



STORM SASH FOR OPENINGS Nos 1-2-3  
SCALE 1/2"=1'-0"

| SCALE AS NOTED        |  | MARK | DESCRIPTION OF REVISION                                                                                                                    |  |
|-----------------------|--|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| CHIEF, E.O.C.         |  | DATE | UNITED STATES<br>DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR<br>NATIONAL PARK SERVICE<br>DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION<br>PREPARED BY EASTERN<br>SITE |  |
| SUPERINTENDENT        |  |      | REHABILITATION OF ADAMS LIBRARY<br>TITLE OF DRAWING                                                                                        |  |
| REGIONAL DIRECTOR     |  |      | LOCATION WITHIN PARK                                                                                                                       |  |
| ASSIST. DIRECTOR, D&C |  |      | ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE<br>NAME OF PARK                                                                                               |  |
| APPROVED              |  |      |                                                                                                                                            |  |
| DIRECTOR              |  |      |                                                                                                                                            |  |

| ORIENTATION   |          |
|---------------|----------|
| PREPARED      | DESIGNED |
| BY TALENT     | DRAWN    |
| BY TALENT     | CHECKED  |
| DATE 12/21/41 | INITIAL  |
| REVISION      |          |
| FIG. NO.      |          |
| SHEET 1 OF 1  |          |
| DRAWING NO.   |          |
| 3003          |          |
| DATE 12/21/41 |          |